

REMARKS

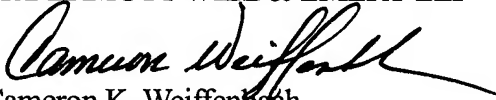
This preliminary amendment is submitted with a request for an RCE. Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled without prejudice and claims 1 and 4-7 have been amended to more clearly define the process of the present invention.

The claims as amended distinguish over the prior art of record because the prior art does not disclose or suggest a process for the production of tequila which comprises the combined steps of (i) chopping leaves obtained from a blue agave plant, (ii) adding water to the chopped blue agave plant leaves to form an aqueous leaf extract, (iii) macerating the aqueous leaf extract to release sugars, (iv) mixing the sugars from step iii with sugars obtained from piñas in the production of tequila to form a sugar mixture, and (v) fermenting the sugar mixture from step iv to tequila. Accordingly, allowance of the claims is courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17 and in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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